

“Life IN Christ”

R. Stanley, May 2025

The phrase, “*In Christ*,” occurs 35 times in the New Testament, 34 by Paul and one by Peter. Here’s Paul’s unbeatable claim —

“For to me, to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21)

In other words,

“Christ HIMSELF is my life!”

All spiritual blessings we enjoy are because we are “*in Christ*” —

Eph 1:3

Let’s study here what “Life in Christ” means —

(1) Life in Christ

means being possessed by the SPIRIT of Christ —

- “*He who does not have the Spirit of Christ is not His!*” (Rom 8:9b)
This is what happens at Rebirth — i.e., being born of the Spirit
This passage speaks of our walk in the Spirit as against in the flesh (vv8-10).

- We are to be the walking Epistles of Christ written not with ink but by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:2,3) —

“manifestly ... read by all men”

A Christian must be a Christian everyday, everywhere, in everything!

- The Spirit of Christ started operating in the ancient prophets themselves —

1 Pet 1:11

Their main theme: Sufferings & Glory of Christ

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10c)

The Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God are often interchangeably used. But the “Spirit of Christ” emphasises the Holy Spirit’s direct connection to Christ, highlighting His character and actions as the Son of God; the “Spirit of God” focusses more broadly on the divine nature of the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity.

The title, “Spirit of God,” might be used while discussing the Holy Spirit’s general work in the world, while the “Spirit of Christ” could be used while talking about the Holy Spirit’s work in the believers.

(2) Life in Christ

means identifying with the CROSS of Christ —

- In Christ — Totally a new creation

2 Cor 5:17

Context: Death of Christ (v15)

He knew no sin, He became sin;

we know no righteousness, we become righteousness (v21).

- The Cross of Christ brings us from Law unto Grace; from the OT to the NT.
2 Cor 3:14-18 ... *Veil removed when we turn to the Lord (Jesus)*
“Liberty” (v17) — *“Law of Liberty”* (Js 1:25)

Many believers under the New Covenant still live under the Old.

Liberty x Legalism

Touch not, Taste not, Handle not, ...

All knots become knots! (Col 2:20-22)

- The *Law* is 430 years younger to the *Promise* made to Abraham (Gal 3:17).
It cannot annul the Covenant of God *“in Christ.”*

The Law was only to bring us to Christ as a guardian on the way;
afterwards, no more under the guardian (who brings children to the school).

(Gal 3:24-28)

- The Cross of Christ has abolished the distinction between —

Jew & Greek	— racial	(v28)
Slave & Free	— social	
Male & Female	— sexual	

- The Cross helps us to cross over all these differences. But in our Churches?
Not only various groups on Earth but also those in Heaven and Earth —

Eph 1:7 ... *Blood*

:10 ... *Both in Heaven and Earth*

This is what the writer of Hebrews explains (Heb 12:22-24) —

“You have come” — not, *“you will come!”*

(3) Life in Christ

means indwelling of the WORD of Christ to overflowing —

- *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly”* (Col 3:16a)
- Apostle John calls the “Word of Christ” as the *“Doctrine of Christ”* —
2 Jn 9

It’s so inevitable/indispensable that he says that the one who doesn’t abide
in the Doctrine of Christ has neither the Father nor the Son!

- When we say, “Word of Christ,” we primarily refer to the words of Christ
contained in the 4 Gospels. Jesus specified them in Mt 7:24,26 —

“These sayings of Mine”

When we say, “Word of God,” it’s much broader. It’s the entire Bible.

But we don't need to differentiate much, because Christ testified —

*“The words I speak to you, I do not speak on My own authority;
but of the Father who dwells in Me” (Jn 14:10)*

In His High Priestly Prayer, He said,

“I have given to them the words which You have given Me” (17:8a)

And concerning the Holy Spirit, He said,

*“He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears
He will speak ... He will take from Mine and declare it to you.”
(16:13b,14b).*

e.g.) Rev 2 & 3

Therefore, Word of God = Word of the Father + Word of the Son + Word of the Spirit

- The outflow of the Word from us is for a threefold purpose —

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| a) Exaltation of God | Col 3:16,17 |
| b) Edification of God's people | |
| c) Evangelisation of the World | |

- a) Exaltation of God (Worship) (v16)

Neh 9:3 ... 6 hours Word, 6 hours Worship

Word leads to Worship (Psa 138:2).

- b) Edification of God's People

Col 3:16a — *“one another”*

- c) Evangelisation of the World

Mt 28:19,20 ... *Make disciples of all nations
and teach them whatever I've commanded you.*

Col 3:18-22 ... Modelling — *“Wives, Husbands, Children, Fathers, Servants”*

They went everywhere preaching the *“Word”* (Acts 8:4).

(4) Life in Christ

means proclaiming the GOSPEL of Christ —

- The entire Bible is about the Gospel of Christ —

Prophesied in the OT and proclaimed in the New. (Foretold ... Fulfilled)

The definition of the Gospel (1 Cor 15:1-5)

“According to the Scriptures ... According to the Scriptures”

- Life in Christ begins when one believes the Gospel.

Redemption is our reconciliation with God —

2 Cor 5:18-21

The final judgment is on whether or not one has believed the Gospel —

1 Pet 4:17

- We must constantly meditate on the mediatory ministry of Christ revealed in the Gospel — 1 Tim 2:3-6

Nothing would gladden our sinking hearts like the “Gospel” —

“Gospel” ... an Anglo-Saxon word = *Good News!*

The Gift of God’s Son is superior to any other blessing from the Father —

Rom 8:32 ... *If God did not spare His own Son ...*

- The greatest good we can do to our fellowmen is sharing the Gospel with them.

Look at Paul’s burden —

Rom 1:14-16 ... *Debtor ... as much as is in me*

9:2 ... *Great sorrow ... continual grief*

10:1,2 ... *Heart’s desire ... prayer ...*

Phil 1:12-14 ... *Least bothered about chains ... furtherance*

Eph 3:8 ... *Least of the saints but given grace to preach the Gospel*
(No inferiority complex!)

Rom 15:17-21 ... *Fully preached the Gospel*

Word ... Deed ... Signs ...

Jerusalem to Illyricum ... not on others’ foundation

“glorifying in Christ!”

- See Paul’s total identification with the Gospel: “*My Gospel*” — Rom 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim 2:8

- Most of us have slowed down in sharing the Gospel.

Every time you share the Gospel, your understanding of it is deepened.

Your spirit becomes jubilant.

That’s the meaning of “*Beautiful Feet!*”

I remember with what joy we used to play tambourine while singing

Gospel songs in villages and streets during our college days!

Carry some tracts with you always for distribution.

(5) Life in Christ

means experiencing the POWER of Christ —

- We normally speak of the power of *God* and the power of the *Holy Spirit*; but when we refer to the Power of *Christ*, it’s that of His Resurrection and Return.

That was the passionate pursuit of Paul —

Phil 3:10 — First, resurrection power, and then, suffering!

i.e., handling sufferings with the power of Christ’s resurrection

He threw away all his credentials for this single purpose (vv7,8).

- Paul's prayer was mainly for the eye-opening of believers to know what's the "*exceeding greatness of His power that works in them*" (Eph 1:17-21)
- It's in suffering we understand the power of Christ which turns our sighing into singing, mourning into dancing (2 Cor 12:9).
- Peter saw a glimpse of Christ's power on the Transfiguration Mount —
2 Pet 1:16-18 (Heights of spiritual experiences/encounters)
Christ is the Head of all power today —
Col 2:9,10
We experience this everytime we gather in His Name (1 Cor 5:4)
- This is the theme of all choruses in Heaven —
Rev 4:11; 5:12,13; 7:12; 12:10; 19:1

(6) Life in Christ

means possessing the MIND of Christ —

- When we study the Gospels, we are attracted more towards the *miracles* of Christ than inspired by the *mind* of Christ.
But Paul's call is unique —
"*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Phil 2:5)
That is, being mindful of the interests of others (v4)
"Ours" must become "others."
- Christ did not please Himself —
Rom 15:1,2,3a
This is a repeated call in the NT —
Rom 12:10 ... *Giving preference to others*
1 Cor 10:33 ... *I please all men in all things to somehow save them!*
Even in the operation of Gifts —
"*... that all may learn and all may be encouraged*" (1 Cor 14:31)
- Selflessness is a must in developing the mind of Christ in us.
Relational problems are rooted in self-seeking (Js 3:16-18) —
Family life/Church life/Ministerial life/Workspot/Social life/etc.
- Blessings of one-mindedness (Phil 2:1,2) —
Encouragement in Christ (1),
Comfort of love (2),
Fellowship of the Spirit (3),
Affection (4) and mercy (5).

How Christ tolerated the behaviour of His disciples for over three years!

(7) Life in Christ

means awaiting the RETURN of Christ —

- We talk so much about “faith” but very little about “hope.”
Faith is for the present blessings, but hope is for future glory.
Read my recent article “*Christian Hope*” on my website.

Faith is on the blessings of Christ’s first coming;
Hope is for the glories of His second coming.

Bible: 100 prophecies about the First Advent, but 300 about the Second.
“If for this life only, we have hope in Christ ...” (1 Cor 15:19)

- We must not only live in Christ, but also die in Him!
1 Thess 4:16; Rev 14:13
This means following Christ faithfully till death.
- *“The just (= justified, redeemed) shall (continue to) live by faith”*
The Life in Christ culminates at His Return.
Heb 10:36-39 ... *Yet a little while Hold on!*

Summary

Life in Christ means —

1. Being possessed by the SPIRIT of Christ
 2. Identifying with the CROSS of Christ
 3. Indwelling of the WORD of Christ
 4. Proclaiming the GOSPEL of Christ
 5. Experiencing the POWER of Christ
 6. Possessing the MIND of Christ
 7. Awaiting the RETURN of Christ
- The reciprocative side of our life in Christ is **“He** in us!”
This is the longing of Jesus —
 - + *I am in My Father,*
You are in Me,
I am in you. | Jn 14:20; 17:23a
 - + *“Christ in us, the Hope of glory”* (Col 1:27)
 - + Finally, we dine with Him and He dines with us! (Rev 3:20b)



Do turn to all the Scripture references for maximum benefit from this Study Outline.

Study also the Author’s next Outline, “Life FOR Christ.”

*These Outlines preached by the Author in Tamil
are uploaded in his YouTube: StanleyOnBible.*